

3.5.4 Minidoka East End Fire Protection District

This FPD covers a total of 21,379 acres including 5,589 acres of BLM land, 13,553 acres of private land, and 2,236 acres of State land. Most of the private land is farmed with irrigation using both surface water and water from deep wells. The BLM land primarily is used as grazing allotments. The Minidoka County FPD, located in Rupert, responds to all fires in the Minidoka East End FPD as well as some fires in the Open Area (Figure 3) north and south of Interstate 86, depending on the location of the fire relative to the district boundary (personal communication – Mike Brown, 2004). A cooperative agreement with the BLM allows Minidoka FPD to respond to fires outside of FPD boundaries with the first four hours free for their services. The BLM would reciprocate with 4 hours of their time in support of the Minidoka FPD (personal communication – Mike Brown, 2004).

Because of the volume of fine fuels present in this FPD, fires tend to be very large with rapid rates of spread. Fire tends to be frequent to this part of Cassia County and as a result cheatgrass is present on much of the rangeland, which tends to increase flammability of the grass and shrub lands (see Figure 3).

Fire, Structural, and Community Assessments for Minidoka East End FPD

The following is a summary of the Fire Hazard Assessment for Minidoka East End FPD. Table 16 shows the complete results. Overall, the three legal subdivisions in this FPD received a Class A (low) fire hazard assessment rating for 12 out of 15 elements (80%) and a Class B (medium) rating for 6 out of 18 elements (33%).

Vegetation Type – Grass is the primary carrier of any ignition to the wildland-urban interface.

Slope – Most slopes within the assessment area are less than 10%.

Aspect – The majority of the structures within the assessment area face east.

Elevation – The elevation within the assessment area averages is between 3500-5500 feet.

Fuel Type – The majority of fuel types within the assessment area is small, light fuels (grass, weeds and shrubs).

Fuel Density – The majority of fuel density within the assessment area is non-continuous fuel bed with grass and/or sparse fuels adjacent to federal land less than 30% cover.

Fuel Bed Depth – The majority fuel bed depth with the assessment area averages less than 1 foot.

Table 16. Fire Hazard Assessment for Minidoka East End FPD

Subdivision/Parcels	Vegetation Type	Rating Elements					
		Slope	Aspect	Elevation	Fuel Type	Fuel Density	Fuel Bed Depth
River Place**	Grass	A	B	B	A	A	A
Jackson Estates**	Grass	A	B	B	A	A	A
Nelson Estates**	Grass	A	B	B	A	A	A

A=Class A low fire hazard assessment rating

B=Class B medium fire hazard assessment rating

C=Class C high fire hazard assessment rating

** Not close to Federal lands

The following is a summary of the Structural Hazard Assessment for Minidoka East End FPD. Table 17 shows the complete results. Overall, the subdivisions received a Class A (low) fire hazard assessment rating for 12 out of 21 elements (57%), a Class B (medium) for 6 out of 21 elements (29%), and a Class C (high) for 3 out of 21 elements (14%).

Structure Density – The structure density within the assessment area is at least one structure per 0-5 acres.

Proximity to Fuels – Structures within the assessment area and adjacent to the wildland-urban interface are 40-100 feet to flammable fuels.

Building Materials – The majority of structures have fire resistant roofs and/or siding.

Survivable Space – The majority of structures within the assessment area have improved survivable space around the property.

Roads – Roads within the assessment area are maintained, with some narrow, two –lane roads with no shoulders.

Response Time – Response time to the assessment area is 20 minutes or less.

Access – Access to assessment area is narrow, dead-end roads or 1 way in, 1 way out and with steep grades.

Table 17. Structural Hazard Assessment for Minidoka East End FPD

Subdivision/Parcels	Rating Elements						
	Structure Density	Proximity of Fuels	Building Materials	Survivable Space	Roads	Response Time	Access
River Place **	A	B	A	A	B	A	C
Jackson Estates **	A	B	A	A	B	A	C
Nelson Estates **	A	B	A	A	B	A	C

A=Class A low fire hazard assessment rating

B=Class B medium fire hazard assessment rating

C=Class C high fire hazard assessment rating

** Not close to Federal lands

Table 18 summarizes the Community Assessment for the Minidoka East FPD.

Table 18. Community Assessment Summary for Minidoka East End FPD

Rating Element	Class A	Class B	Class C	Rating (A, B, or C)
Community Description	There is a clear line where residential business, and public structures meet wildland fuels. Wildland fuels do not generally continue into the developed area.	There is no clear line of demarcation; wildland fuels are continuous outside of and within the developed area.	The community generally exists where homes, ranches, and other structures are scattered but adjacent to wildland vegetation.	A

Response Time	Prompt response time to interface areas (20 min or less).	Moderate response time to interface area (20-40 minutes).	Lengthy response time to interface area (40+ minutes).	B
Firefighting Capability	Adequate structural fire department. Sufficient personnel, equipment, and wildland firefighting capability and experience.	Inadequate fire department. Limited personnel, and or equipment but with some wildland firefighting experience and training.	Fire department non-existent or untrained and/or equipped to fight wildland fire.	A
Water Supply	Adequate supply of fire hydrants and pressure, and/or open water sources (pools, lakes, reservoirs, rivers, etc.).	Inadequate supply of fire hydrants, or limited pressure. Limited water supply.	No pressure water system available near interface. No surface water available.	B
Local Emergency Operations Group (EOG)	Active EOG. Evacuation plan in place.	Limited participation in EOG. Have some form of evacuation process.	No EOG. No evacuation plan in place.	B
Structure Density	At least one structure per 0-5 acres.	On structure per 5-10 acres.	Less than one structure per 10 acres.	A
Community Planning Practices	County/local laws and zoning ordinances require use of fire safe residential design and adequate ingress/egress of fire suppression resources. Fire Department actively participates in planning process.	Local officials have an understanding of appropriate community planning practices for wildfire loss mitigation. Fire department has limited input to fire safe development and planning efforts.	Community standards for fire safe development and protection are marginal or non-existent. Little or no effort has been made in assessing and applying measures to reduce wildfire impact.	B
Fire Mitigation Ordinances, Laws, or Regulations in Place	Have adopted local ordinances or codes requiring fire safe landscaping, building and planning. Fire Department actively participates in planning process.	Have voluntary ordinances or codes requiring fire safe landscaping and building practices. Fire Department practices in planning process.	No local codes, laws or ordinances requiring fire safe building landscaping or planning processes.	B
Fire Department Equipment	Good supply of structure and wildland fire apparatus and miscellaneous specialty equipment.	Smaller supply of fire apparatus in fairly good repair with some specialty equipment.	Minimum amount of fire apparatus, which is old and in need of repair. None or little specialty equipment.	A
Fire Department Training and Experience	Large, fully paid fire department with personnel that meet NFPA or NWCG training requirements, are experienced in wildland fire, and have adequate equipment.	Mixed fire department. Some paid and some volunteer personnel. Limited experience, training and equipment to fight wildland fire.	Small, all volunteer fire department. Limited training, experience and budget with regular turnover of personnel. Do not meet NFPA or NWCG standards.	B

Community Fire Safe Efforts and programs already in place	Organized and active groups (Fire Dept.) providing educational materials and programs for their community.	Limited interest and participation in educational programs. Fire Department does some prevention and public education.	No interest of participation in educational programs. No prevention/education efforts by fire department.	A
Community support and attitudes	Actively supports urban interface plans and actions.	Some participation in urban interface plans and actions.	Opposes urban interface plans and efforts.	A